



**MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE
DEPUTY MINISTER OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY
DR NOBUHLE NKABANE (MP)**

**MQA INAUGURAL MINING SKILLS LEKGOTLA
BIRCHWOOD CONFERENCE CENTRE, BOKSBURG**

23 NOVEMBER 2023

Programme Directors, **Ms Kedibone Moroane and Mr. Brian Ncube**

Board Chairperson of the Mining Qualifications Authority, **Mr David Msiza**, and all Board members

CEO of the MQA, **Dr Thabo Mashongoane** and your executives

Leadership of Organised Business, **MCSA, BUSA**

Leadership of Organised Labour – **AMCU, NUM, SOLIDARITY AND UASA**

Team DMRE and representatives of other government departments

CEOs and representatives of State-Owned Entities

Distinguished Guests

Members of the media

Allow me to start by **congratulating** the board and executives of the **Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA)** for achieving **two successive clean audits**.

This proves that **good governance** in our **State-Owned Entities (SOEs)** reduces **operational and financial risks**, and thus enable them to deliver on their mandates for the benefit of the people of South Africa. We hope that you will not only maintain this standard but improve and become exemplary to many of our SOEs.

Let me also express my profound gratitude for the opportunity to engage with all the delegates at this inaugural **Mining Skills Lekgotla** on **pertinent issues that affect the mining sector**.

This Mining Skills Lekgotla convened under the theme: ***“Envisioning Mining Skills Beyond 2030”*** is aligned with government’s mission of building a ***sunrise mining industry***, despite our country’s history of mining.

Notwithstanding the ***significant contribution of mining*** to South Africa’s development, truth is that this happened on the back of the ***marginalisation of black people in general, and Africans in particular.***

I am certain that most of you remember that, at some point in South Africa’s mining history, ***no black person could get their hands on a blasting certificate*** - regardless of the skills and academic qualifications they possessed – because the certificate was reserved for what was termed as ***“scheduled persons”***, which in real terms were ***“white people”***.

This unjust act was reversed as a result of the efforts of ***mineworkers*** who ***stood against the oppressors*** and demanded ***equal treatment for all mineworkers***, irrespective of race and gender.

With the advent of democracy in 1994, this ***government actively advanced transformation*** as a means of economic growth, development, and pursued the ***enhanced participation of black in the mainstream economy***, particularly in the mining and energy sectors.

In order to ***redress the atrocities of the apartheid government*** and the injustices against black people - mineworkers in particular, government enacted the ***Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act (MPRDA)*** in 2002 and introduced the ***Mining Charter in 2004.***

As the Department of Mineral Resources and Energy (DMRE), we continue to enforce these regulatory instruments to ***achieve the desired transformation, encourage investments, growth, and inclusiveness***

in the mining and energy sectors with an intention to propel our country on a ***path to inclusive growth and development***.

Programme Directors,

It is encouraging that gathered here are key stakeholders who have come together to ***identify skills, programmes, and qualifications*** that will ensure the existence of mining in South Africa for centuries to come.

Cognisant of the fact that as we meet here today, our country is faced with ***sluggish economic growth, high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality***, the discussions here must be geared towards finding lasting solutions to our challenges.

Mining is rapidly changing and requires a ***smart and mobile workforce*** with commensurate skills sets. Our task as ***social partners*** – government, labour, and business - in the South African mining industry is to ensure that as we adapt to the new ways of mining, ***we leave no one behind***.

The challenges and opportunities before us today are such that, we must have ***educational and technical capacity and capability to navigate our way*** through the dynamics of today's mining sector.

We must have programmes to ***reskill the existing workforce*** and ***prepare them for the future of mining***. As we do so, we must also find space for the ***unskilled and under-educated workers***. These are the same workers who will still convert investments into wealth.

As the DMRE, we are engaged in discussions with the MQA on scaling up several ***skills development programmes*** to transform the lives of mineworkers and foster participation in the mining industry. These programmes include, amongst others, ***training of artisanal and small-***

scale miners, entrepreneurial skills training, training of seismologists, and agricultural related training programmes.

Noting that our country is plagued by **illegal mining which is often wrongly equated to artisanal and small scale mining**, the DMRE developed and published the **artisanal and small-scale mining policy** in 2022, to foster the creation of a formalised artisanal and small-scale mining industry that can operate optimally in a sustainable manner while contributing to the country's economy.

Working with the **MQA and Mintek**, government has **trained over six hundred miners to operate as artisanal miners** across the country. In addition to this, one hundred and fifty learners are currently in training and are expected to complete their training in this Quarter.

The DMRE will soon embark on **workshops** in areas with where there is a potential of artisanal and small-scale mining to **promote optimal and orderly exploitation of mineral resources for the benefit of all South Africans**. We will further promote and facilitate entry and meaningful participation of historically disadvantaged persons in artisanal and small-scale mining. We hope that you will join us at these workshops.

Informed by a set mechanism to **ascertain workers skills and training in areas where black people were previously excluded**, we are encouraged by the discussions between the **MQA and AgriSETA** aimed at developing a programme to train young people and former mineworkers on **agricultural related activities** to enable them produce food and consequently alleviate poverty.

The recruitment of young mineworkers, with technical knowledge of the new ways of mining is needed. This means, we must collectively **invest in young people** who study **science, technology, engineering, and**

mathematics (STEM) subjects and encourage them to make career choices that are aligned with the needs of the mining and energy sectors.

We are pleased by the developments in the **establishment of a mining school in the North West province** and are convinced that success in this regard, will **empower young people** with necessary **information, skills, and expertise** which will enable them to become leaders in the mining industry beyond 2030.

Programme Directors,

Given the complexities in mining, this Lekgotla must **guide our mining skills agenda** of the future.

In conclusion, allow me to implore on the delegates at this Lekgotla to ensure that the decisions taken here will help us **grow South Africa's mining sector**, embrace, and promote **transformation**, promote the **reskilling of our mineworkers**, recruit **young people** and **women** as a prerequisite for building a **sunrise industry**.

I wish you a successful Lekgotla.

I thank you.